

Environmental Quality Council

I. Purpose and Duties

The EQC is the Legislature's Interim Committee on natural resources, the environment, and related issues and policies.

EQC Purpose

- To promote or encourage a unified effort to implement the state policy set forth in 75-1-103, MCA
- Provide interim oversight of DEQ, DNRC, and FWP

EQC Duties

- Generate information
- Review and appraise state programs
- Conduct investigations and studies
- Review Administrative Rules and Agency Legislation
- Identify environmental changes and trends
- Develop and recommend policy to the Governor and to the Legislature

II. Draft Rules and Procedures

****EQC Action Needed****

EQC Quorums and Parliamentary Procedures

- Meetings in Helena unless prior notice
- 10 day public notice for regular meetings
- At least 24-hour notice for special meetings - no public hearing items at these meetings
- Rules of the Senate apply to EQC regarding quorum and parliamentary procedure

EQC Public Participation Guidelines

- EQC committed to public participation as part of policy development and review
- Maintain mailing list for interested parties
- Public comment at discretion of the Chair
- Written comments save time
- Courtesy is required
- Recess at the discretion of Chair
- Electronic recording OK if not disruptive

EQC Election of Officers

- Chair and Vice Chair (or co-chairs) must be from different parties (5-5-213 MCA)

Proxy voting

- Proxies discouraged, especially on new debate or questions not raised in a prior hearing. Proxies must be written.
- Chair determines if the proxy is relevant to the issue being considered

EQC Travel and Reimbursement Rules

- Council members reimbursed for food, lodging, mileage, and misc. expenses incurred traveling to and from EQC meetings, as provided by law
- Members paid for time spent in EQC meetings
- Chair must approve reimbursement for travel expenses incurred at non-EQC meetings attended by members and staff

III. Decisionmaking Process

EQC Resources

- Council Budget
- Council Member Time
- Staff Resources = 1.6 Interim FTE

IV. Subcommittee Formation Criteria

(Handout)

V. Staff & Council Responsibilities/Role

Council Responsibilities/Role

Provide sound environmental policies for the state

Evaluate the implementation of existing policies

Offer a balanced legislative forum for the resolution of issues

Attend, prepare, direct staff

Request what you need and review what you request

Staff Responsibilities/Role

Assist the EQC in achieving its mission

Organize meetings and topic discussions

Provide impartial factual information

Conduct requested research

Develop policy options for Council

Draft requested legislation

Provide research and other assistance to the division and other legislators

Legal services

EQC Staff – Research Priorities

Legislative Environmental Analyst -- (75-1-323, MCA)

EQC staff:

- are Legislative Services Division employees assigned to assist the EQC w/ statutory duties.
- put top research priority on topics included the EQC work plan, which must be established by the EQC's meeting Sept 15 & 16.
- may conduct other research at members' request, but if it exceeds 2 days' work, must be approved by Chair.
- update EQC publications, which are then reviewed by Chair and Vice-Chair or an appointed review committee.

VI. Mailings and Communication

Mailings

- Two weeks prior to meeting, information packets are mailed to members.
- Electronic-only packets are available.
- EQC Broadcast– audio guide
- Website – all mailing documents posted at leg.mt.gov/eqc

EQC Communication

- Expectations of staff
- Member Preference -- email, telephone?
- Providing information from interested parties (forwarding email)
- Special instructions?

EQC Requests for Materials

- EQC records are subject to the right to know provisions of the Constitution - individual privacy protected.
- Records subject to public scrutiny are available for inspection and copying.
- Certain records are not available.
- EQC phones available to members for council business.